

Ivan Iwannado

Ivan Iwannado knows what he wants to do, but like most of us he'll take a while to figure out how to do it. Learn from his mistakes



THIS MONTH:

IVAN TACKLES ERROR REPORTS

Ivan Iwannado's teenage son Mikhail says his computer keeps crashing. He uses it to talk to his mates online, but regularly it just freezes, Internet Explorer stops working and Mikhail gets a message saying that a serious error has occurred and asking if he wants to send a report about it to Microsoft. Why is Mikhail's computer behaving like this, and what should Ivan do about it?

Run in the opposite direction, probably. There are so many reasons why computers crash and refuse to work, Ivan could spend the rest of his life sorting it out. However, it is definitely worth letting Windows XP send an error report to Microsoft, explaining what's gone wrong.

But Ivan's a bit worried about the consequences of doing that. Heaven knows what Mikhail's getting up to on his computer. Ivan's not sure he wants Microsoft – or anyone else for that matter – finding out the gory details.

Even so, Ivan can still report the error. Microsoft plays it straight in this area because it knows people are worried about privacy. The error report does contain a small portion of the contents of your computer's memory and the address your computer uses to connect to the internet. But Microsoft has promised that it will never track an error report back to the sender personally. There is an option for Ivan to track the error report to see what the problem was, but that's his choice. The information still won't be used against him in any way.

So why should Ivan care about sending Microsoft an error report?

Because Microsoft really does take note of what's going on. If Ivan and thousands of other people send a report showing that Windows XP falls over when used in a particular way, the problem will be analysed and someone will try to fix it, either in a future version of the software or in a service pack.

But that doesn't help him with the problem straight away; it's all jam tomorrow, as far as Ivan can see.

That depends. If you submit an error report, you can choose to track its progress using the Microsoft Online Crash Analysis (MOCA) website at



<http://oca.microsoft.com/en/welcome.aspx>. Ivan can visit any time to see the status of any error reports he's submitted. Once a report has been submitted, Ivan should get a response from MOCA that will tell him the steps he can take to solve the problem. Depending on the problem, Ivan might be told where to get updated drivers from the Windows Update website to prevent the problem recurring.

So can Ivan use this for any Microsoft application?

Sort of. You can send reports when any Microsoft application fails, but you can only track errors that stopped Windows completely. It's still worth sending reports, though, because they will be analysed and used to improve future versions. For example, if MOCA discovers that your problem was caused by a device driver written by another company, it will tell the company what the problems are and encourage it to produce an updated device driver.

Isn't this making us all act a bit like unpaid testers of software that should work anyway?

That's one way to look at it. But if Ivan's experienced the problem, he has a choice: he can either swear at the screen and do nothing positive, or try to make things better in the future.

OK, that makes sense. But a couple of times Ivan's computer has crashed because of some old kit he's using that isn't completely compatible with Windows XP. Ivan knows what the problem is, but the company that made the kit has gone broke. There's not a lot of point going through the motions reporting an error that will never be fixed. Is there any way to stop the wretched message asking him if he wants to send an error report?

There is a way to turn off error reporting, globally or selectively. To set up or turn off error reporting, Ivan needs to right-click on My Computer in his Start menu, then click Properties. In the Advanced tab, he'll find Error Reporting. He can allow or disable reporting for Windows, as well as certain programs. He can also create a list of programs for which he doesn't want to see error reports.

Ivan isn't a particularly happy man. Mikhail's computer is still crashing, and Ivan has a horrible feeling he's going to spend the rest of the summer trying to figure out what's going wrong. However, at least he's reported the problem to Microsoft. The crash report site didn't have any advice on how to stop the problem happening, but at least Ivan feels he's let Microsoft know that something's wrong. 

Nigel Knowitall



If you want to get something done using software but are unsure how to do it, fear not — help is at hand from our resident expert, Nigel Knowitall

DELETING ROWS IN EXCEL THE SIMPLE WAY



In *Shopper* July 2005 Nigel answered a question about deleting rows in Excel. James Howell had a report in Excel that showed staff being trained at particular stores. He wanted the report to show only those stores where staff had been trained within a particular date range. To do this, he wanted to delete rows from his spreadsheet — those relating to stores where no-one has been trained, and any rows where the training took place outside a specific date range.

You wrote a macro that achieved this task and ensured that all the rows were checked, despite the problem that when one row is deleted the rest of the sheet shifts up a row. However, there is an easier way to check and delete rows. Simply run the macro from bottom to top using something like this:

```
For rw = rowcount + currrw to currrw
step -1
    trained = cells(rw,3).value
    datetrained = cells(rw,3).value
    If <condition here> then worksheets
    (1).cells(rw,1).entirerow.delete
Next
```

This way, it does not matter if the block of data under the deletion moves up one row. There is no need for the 'else' statement either.

The currrw variable is no longer needed in the loop, which can then be simplified further by removing references to currrw, changing the 'for' statement to:

```
for rw = rowcount + 3 to 3 step -1
```

Hope that helps!
Nick Howitt

That's an excellent suggestion. You can usually automate moving through a set of rows in Excel using Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) statements such as:

```
For Each rw In Worksheets("Sheet1").
Rows
    rw.RowHeight = 4
Next rw
```

This can be made to work through the rows that have data and that join on to the current row using:

```
For Each rw In Worksheets(1).Cells(1,
1).CurrentRegion.Rows
Next
```

However, if you attempt to use this type of loop to test values within rows and delete the contents, you'll find that when you've deleted a row, the next row is missed from your test. Consequently, you can end up with data left that should have been deleted. This is because when Excel deletes a row, the data below it in the spreadsheet moves up into its place. If the loop moves down to the next row, the data that was moved into the deleted row is not tested.

This solution overcomes this problem because you start from the bottom of the data. If a row is deleted, and all the data below it is moved up one row, it doesn't matter because that data has already been checked.

While the default for a loop is to go from 1 to N, where N is the final value, you can just as easily go from N to 1, or from 1 to N in steps of two, or from 5 to N+5; you have a great deal of freedom, and it can result in code that is much simpler.

PUBLISHER PAGINATION PROBLEM

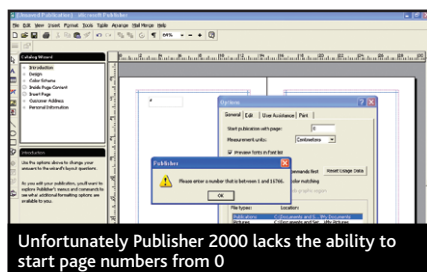


My problem relates to Microsoft Publisher 2000. I have a Publisher document that has several pages with a running page number in the background. I need the first page to be a header page with no page number showing, so that page 1, page 2 and so on appear on the second, third and consecutive pages.

The only way I can achieve this is to have the header page as the very last page. I use the Ignore background option so the page number is not printed. If the header page is the first page in the document, page 2 appears on the page that I want labelled as page 1.

The only other way I can see to get the desired result is to add a page number text box on every page and ignore the background function for setting up running page numbers. Any ideas, please?
David Shepherd

Publisher 2000 is useless in this respect, but Publisher 2002 and 2003 are better. From Publisher 2002 onwards, you can get what you want by using an option that doesn't show the page number on the first page. You can



then insert another section after the header page, and start its page numbering from 1. The only other simple solution that I know of, other than the one you've suggested, is to create the header page in another document and print it separately.

MEETING A TARGET IN EXCEL



I need to compare two dates and times: a Target Date and Time and an Actual Date and Time. The result I want is this: if the Target is smaller than the Actual then the result should be Pass, but if not it should be a Fail. I tried the following:

```
=IF((DateCell1 + TimeCell2)>(DateCell3 + TimeCell4), "P", "F")
```

But it doesn't always work. Not being a financial accountant, I am totally stuck. I have attached a bit of the spreadsheet. Please help!

Harry Potts

I've checked your spreadsheet, and the formula you use works in most cases. But Excel dates and times can give strange results when you least expect them. Even when a cell is formatted to show just a time, it can still have a hidden date portion. The reason your formula sometimes doesn't work is because one of the calculations on which the time cells are based gives a value that is one day plus the time element. This appears in the spreadsheet as 8:30, say, when in fact what is stored is 1 day, 8 hours, 30 minutes.

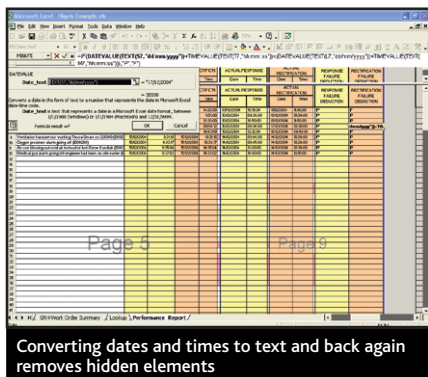
If you're going to use times and dates for comparisons, make sure you're working with just the date element or the time element. There are three functions that can help with this: Datevalue, Timevalue and Text.

Datevalue takes a text string in a date format and converts it to a date. Timevalue takes a text string in a time format and converts it to a time. Text takes a number and turns it into a string of text in the format you specify. Here you take the Date and use the Text function to convert it from a date into a text string in the format dd/mm/yyyy. You then convert it back to a date using DateValue. Any hidden time elements are dropped during this process.

Next, you need to take the time in the time cell and convert it to a text string using the format hh:mm:ss. This is passed into the TimeValue function, which converts it back to a time. The hidden day part is dropped when the time is converted to text.

When the time and the date parts are added together and the actual and planned values compared, everything should work.

In your original spreadsheet, the date and time cells are S7, T7, L7 and M7 so your formula is:



Converting dates and times to text and back again removes hidden elements

=IF((S7+T7)<(L7+M7), "P", "F")

You need to replace this with:

=IF(DATEVALUE(TEXT(S7,"dd/mm/yyyy"))+
TIMEVALUE(TEXT(T7,"hh:mm:ss"))<(DATEV
ALUE(TEXT(L7,"dd/mm/yyyy"))+TIMEVALUE
(TEXT(M7,"hh:mm:ss"))),"P","F")

This looks horrible, but it's simply applying
TimeValue and Text to the time parts, and
DateValue and Text to the date parts.

UNUSUAL ATTACHMENT

Q I was sent an attachment that claims
it's a VCF file. What is a VCF file and
how do I use it in Outlook?

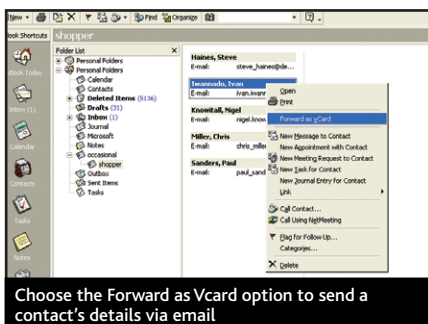
Phil Thynne

A A VCF file is a virtual business card
or Vcard. You can share contact
information with other people easily
using Vcard files. If you want to add the contact
details to your contact list in Outlook, just drag the
attachment to your Contacts folder and it will be
added. To send a Vcard to someone else, right-click
on the contact you want to send. In the list that
appears, choose Forward as Vcard. You'll see a
new email open with the contact details as a
Vcard attachment.

OVER THE WILD BLUEYONDER

Q I am not receiving incoming emails.
They seem to be blocked by the
internet provider. My provider is
Telewest and I subscribe to the Blueyonder
Broadband service. I use Kaspersky Anti-Virus
and Firewall, Spybot, SpywareBlaster, Ad-Aware
and Trojan Defence Suite (TDS). These are run
on Windows XP Professional Edition and I use
Microsoft Outlook for email.

For months I was getting email from adult
sites. I did not open these but used rules and
alerts on the web-based email service to delete



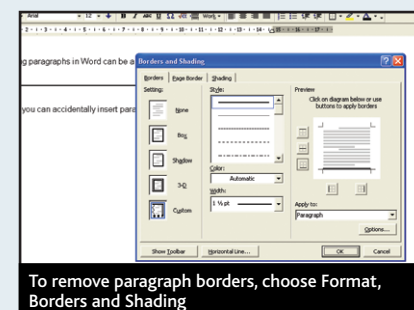
Choose the Forward as Vcard option to send a
contact's details via email

WHAT'S MY LINE?

Q When I'm typing in Word, I
occasionally generate a horizontal
line going right across the page.
Sometimes I can delete this line, but other
times it stays there no matter what I do. If I
put more text above the line, it moves down;
if I remove a paragraph, it moves up. If I try to
select it, I can't. How can I delete the lines and
prevent them appearing in the future?

Mark Thompson

A The reason you can't delete the line is
because it's not a set of characters but
a paragraph border. If you type three
hyphens, asterisks, underscore characters or equals
signs followed by a carriage return, Word helpfully
decides you want to set a bottom border for the



To remove paragraph borders, choose Format,
Borders and Shading

them permanently. As time went on, I received
fewer of these in Outlook. About a month ago,
I stopped getting any spam emails. My web-
based download box identified a number of
emails, but only a fraction of these showed up
in Outlook's inbox. This pleased me, as I thought
my rules were working.

For the past two weeks, though, I have only
been getting the odd email, which I thought was
strange. So I checked Blueyonder's email facility,
where I discovered that I was still getting the
usual number, minus those I set rules for.

However, when I clicked Send/Receive
in Outlook on my PC, only one or two come
through. For example, emails from *Computer
Shopper*, *Serif* and *Insight* were all in my email
box held by Blueyonder, but not one of them
was transferred to my PC.

I have gone into Tools and checked the
privacy settings, but I can find no changes.
Can you suggest anything?

Mick

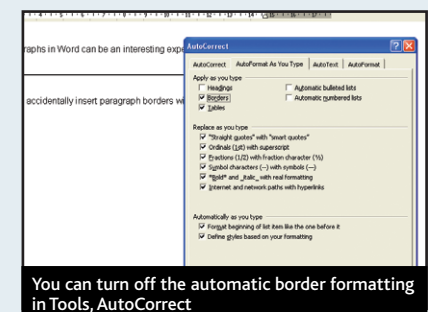
A I've done a bit of research on this one.
While various people have complained
about this over the years, there doesn't
seem to be one answer that solves all problems.

You should check whether any of the emails
stuck in Blueyonder have a large attachment that is
taking a long time to download, causing Outlook to
give up halfway through. Another possibility might
be a corrupted message that the mail server can't
deal with correctly. Some people have reported
problems with apparently empty messages that
have no sender, message or body text, causing
Outlook to stop downloading emails.

current paragraph. You can usually delete the
border by highlighting the lines above and below
it, then pressing the delete key. This doesn't always
work, however, because you may not manage to
select the entire paragraph in this way.

To definitely delete the border, first place your
cursor directly above the line. Choose Borders and
Shading from the Format menu. In the dialog that
appears, look in the Setting section on the left, and
change the setting to None.

If you decide that you don't want to
have borders inserted automatically, choose
AutoCorrect from the Tools menu. Select
AutoFormat as You Type, and in the list that
appears, untick the box named Borders. In
Microsoft Word XP and later, the box is called
Border Lines.



You can turn off the automatic border formatting
in Tools, AutoCorrect

Look in your Blueyonder inbox and see if
there are any suspicious-looking messages, and try
deleting them using the web interface. You should
also run Outlook's Inbox Repair tool. This is included
with all versions of Office and can be used to fix
problems with your Outlook Inbox file. You need to
close Microsoft Outlook if it's running, though.

Use Windows Explorer to find the utility, called
Scanpst.exe. You need to work through the folder
structure that starts in \Program Files and continues
through Common Files and System. The exact path
will depend on your version of Office. My copy of
Office 2000 had the path C:\Program Files\
Common Files\System\Mapi\1033\NT. I've also
seen the file located at \Program Files\Common
Files\System\MSMAPI\1033.

Eventually, you should find Scanpst.exe.
Double-click on the file and, in the dialog box,
specify the name of the Outlook .pst file you want
to repair. You can browse to find your Outlook file
or type it in if you know the location. A typical
location would be C:\Documents and Settings\
Nigel\Local Settings\Application Data\Microsoft\
Outlook\outlook.pst. Replace 'Nigel' with your
username. Click Start to begin the scan. When
scanning is complete, and if errors were found, you
will be guided through the repair process. **ES**

CONTACT

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software ask the expert, Nigel Knowitall

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